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ABSTRACT

Outlines an operating plan for the Houston Community College System Distance Education Department. The report begins with a brief historical overview of the department and introduces the mission and members of 1999 Task Force on Distance Education and the 2001 Distance Education Faculty Curriculum Committee. The authors also highlight significant departmental accomplishments that have occurred since the 1999 Task Force met (e.g., increased enrollment, significant growth in the number of courses offered, establishment of a Distance Education Advisory Committee). Following a review of the Department's mission and definition of distance education, the report outlines the department's strategic goals, relating each one to "Building a Learning College, Houston Community College System Strategic Plan for 2000-2003." The next section of the operating plan summarizes the department's distance education products (e.g., academic credit courses leading to a degree), customer base, and delivery methods. The remainder of the report outlines the department's organizational structure, faculty and student evaluation processes, and course development procedures. Appended are specific distance education guidelines for department chairs. (RC)

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Operating Plan for Distance Education at Houston Community College System

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Operating Plan for
Distance Education at
Houston Community College System

Last Revised 3/6/02

(Note special addendum outlining Department Chair responsibilities at end of document)

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Operating Plan for
Distance Education at
Houston Community College System

I. Introduction:

The Distance Education Department (DE) at HCCS presents a great many opportunities to fulfill its mission when aligned with the "The Power of Learning: Building a Learning College, Strategic Plan for 2000-2003." With DE, HCCS has already realized very significant growth in enrollment and revenue, the innovative use of technology, and the ability to offer educational opportunities to students who traditionally have not been able to attend classes.

However, there are many players in distance education throughout the country, both academically-based and business-based, moving aggressively in this market. HCCS must continue to respond and develop a quality distance education programs and opportunities not only to remain competitive with the field, but also to provide the community college student of the 21st century what he/she demands. We must take full advantage of the opportunities presented through technology and our high-quality, multidisciplinary faculty.

The DE program and faculty still require the continued support and necessary incentives sufficient to encourage further development from all colleges of the Houston Community College System. It must be organized and supported in a way that promotes further growth in enrollment and quality service to its clientele.

This operating plan presents a means for Distance Education to function and interact within HCCS that will help provide for the maintenance, support, and planned growth of the program.

II. History:

Distance Education has a lengthy and progressive history at HCCS. Starting in 1986 with courses offered over PBS on Channel 8, DE expanded to videotape, cable TV, print-based, computer modem, and most recently, web-based courses.

Administratively, Distance Education has passed through many hands. It began under the original centralized administration, then became a major department under the College Without Walls (CWW), was transferred back to the system under Educational Development when CWW was dissolved, and finally was transferred to Southeast College as a "hub" program under a reorganization in 1996. Since that reorganization, it became increasingly clear that the current organization provided few incentives for the remaining colleges to support DE. In addition, funding of the program at the college

level has greatly limited growth and development. The general feeling was that resources existed system-wide that could be brought together to better support Distance Education.

Therefore in 1999, a Task Force on Distance Education was appointed and charged with examining these resources and recommending changes. Their membership is listed below.

In 2001, a Faculty Curriculum Committee for Distance Education was appointed and charged by Dr. Charles Cook, Vice Chancellor for Educational Development, and Stephen Levey, Executive Director of Distance Education & HCCTV, to review current strengths, weaknesses, and plans for improvement for DE, specifically in response to issues brought to light by the SACS Self-Study Committee. This Committee was further charged to make policy and procedure recommendations related to these identified issues. Their membership is also listed below.

1999 Task Force on Distance Education	2001 Faculty Curriculum Comm. For DE
Pat Barden	David Ross, Co-Chair
Roger Boston	Mark Tiller, Co-Chair
Linda Comte	Gisela Abels
Margaret Forde	William Askew
Vince Hamilton	Evelyn Ballard
James Patterson	Linda Daigle
Sylvia Ramos	Michael Edwards
Manuel Reyes	Michael Golden
James Vasquez	Donald Green
Pat Williamson	Michael McCormick
	Marina Nathan
	Helen Orman
	James Patterson
	Beverly Perry
	Glenn Perser
	Ed Reasoner
	Sara Saderion
	Karen Saenz
	Nora Jo Sherman

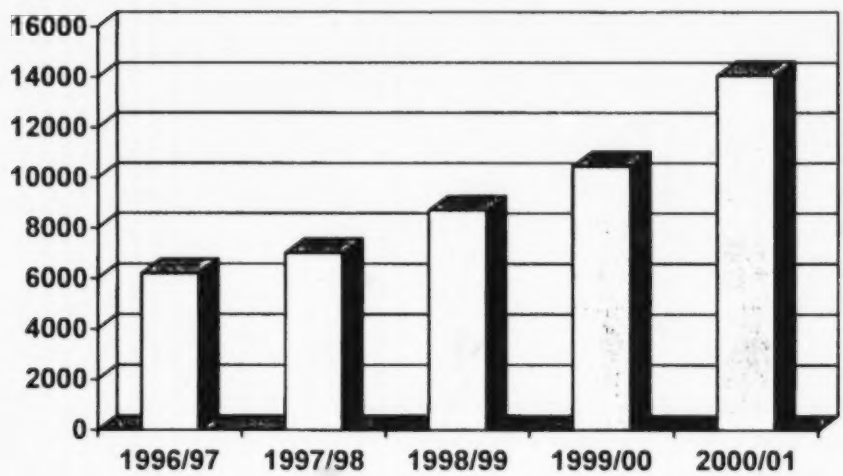
	Pat Barden, DE Staff
	Stephen Levey, Exec. Dir., DE

The findings and recommendations of the Task Force on Distance Education (1999) and the Faculty Curriculum Committee for Distance Education (2001), together with many ongoing, established, and successful practices of the DE Department form the basis for much of this operating plan.

In addition to the Faculty Curriculum Committee, several other notable events/milestones have occurred since the 1999 Task Force met. They include, but are not limited to:

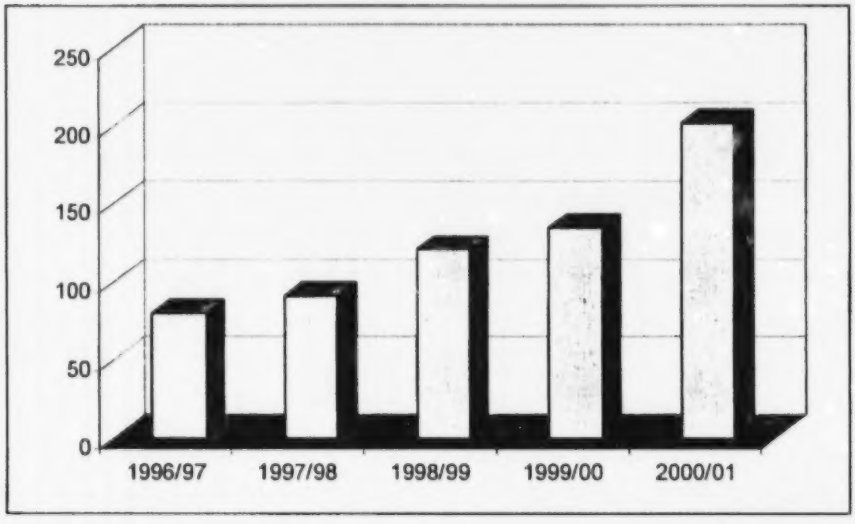
- In 2000, an Executive Director was recruited and hired to head the DE program, grow enrollment, and provide leadership on an institution-wide basis.
- Course enrollment has grown dramatically over the past five fiscal years (1996/97 to2000/01) at an annual average of almost 23%. The following chart (*Fig. 1*) tracks enrollment growth to include the last five years:

Figure 1: Distance Education Enrollment
(duplicated headcount)



- There has also been a significant growth in number of distance education courses offered to students. The chart below (*Fig. 2*) demonstrates that growth.

Figure 2: Number of Distance Education Courses Offered by HCCS (final semester of each academic year)



- Workforce enrollment headcount revenue had previously been directed to the "home college" of the instructor. However, starting in the Fall/2000 semester, all headcount revenue (tuition and state reimbursement) for academic distance education enrollment was also directed to the college of the instructor teaching the DE course. This provided a significant revenue-based incentive for each college to grow their distance education offerings. Further, it provided more incentive for faculty to increase their professional skills in the area of instructional technology.
- The Distance Education Department now also meets regularly with Academic and Workforce Deans, faculty who teach distance education courses, and the department chairs of departments that teach DE courses. The purpose of these meetings is to announce and discuss new and existing policies, procedures, and issues.
- A Distance Education Advisory Committee was formed to provide direction and counsel to the Distance Education Department on various issues. Faculty members will be replaced on an annual basis. This will be done in early 2002. In the future, additional representation to the Advisory Committee will come from the colleges, particularly by adding more faculty. Also, the DE representation should be as staff and not members of the Committee itself. Finally, an academic, workforce, and student services dean will be added. The current membership of that committee is listed below:

Faculty Members (one-year term):

Robert Ford	Faculty – Central College
Glenn Perser	Faculty – Northeast College
Jan Greco	Faculty – Northwest College
James P..tterson	Faculty – Southeast College
Doug Rowlett	Faculty – Southwest College

Standing Members:

Charles Cook	Vice Chancellor for Educational Development
Evelyn Ballard	Faculty Administrative Assistant, Distance Education
Sylvia Ramos	President, Southeast College
Juan Perez	Executive Director of International Initiatives
Fena Garza	Associate Vice Chancellor for Educational Development
Dianne Bynum	Interim Exec. Director for Marketing and Public Information
Stephen Levey	Executive Director, Distance Education & HCCTV
Vince Hamilton	General Manager, HCCTV
Judy Cantwell	Chair, Southeast College Library
Mary Page	Counseling, Southwest College
Weldon Elbert	Assistant Dean, Enrollment Services
Sydney Elliott	Director, Instructional Computing Resource Ctr.
Jose Villarreal	Vice Chancellor for Economic Development

III. Mission:

The following mission statement has been reviewed and approved by the office of the Vice Chancellor for Educational Development, the Academic and Workforce Deans, the Distance Education Advisory Committee, the Faculty Curriculum Committee for Distance Education, and the Southeast College administration.

The mission of the Distance Education Department of Houston Community College System is to collaborate with college and system offices to provide students with a comprehensive array of credit and non-credit courses, programs, and associated services. These are delivered via technology, maximizing accessibility by removing the barriers of location and time. Distance Education courses and services of the highest possible quality should be delivered in a timely, customer-oriented, and cost-efficient manner.

IV. Definition of Distance Education:

Distance Education includes any course, credit or non-credit, offered in such a way that would permit a student to fulfill more than 50% of his/her contact hours required for the course through the use of technology without meeting on a campus (excluding orientation and testing).

V. Strategic Goals:

Strategic goals for the DE Department are outlined in the table below (*Fig. 3*). Specific reference is made in the left-hand column of the table to the related component supported by that goal in "Building a Learning College, HCCS Strategic Plan for 2000-2003" to tie the DE Department's activities specifically to supporting overall strategic direction of Houston Community College System. These goals have been reviewed and approved by the office of the Vice Chancellor for Educational Development, the Academic and Workforce Deans, the Distance Education Advisory Committee, and the Southeast College administration.

Figure 3: Strategic Goals of Distance Education

Related Element in "Building a Learning College, HCCS Strategic Plan for 2000-2003"	**System-Wide Goals**
Mission Statement	• The mission of the Distance Education Department and its activities must be consistent with the mission and strategic plan of Houston Community College System.
Obj. 4.1.3	• The Department will serve all colleges of the System equally with all services offered.
Mission State. #1 Obj. 2.4 Obj. 4.1.3	• The Department will encourage and support the development and use of distance education throughout the colleges and system.
Outcome #2 Outcome #6	• The Department will foster the growth of revenue streams to the HCCS colleges and the departments within the colleges participating in distance education course delivery.
Obj. 4.2.2 Obj. 3.4.1	• The Department will establish course development, production, policies, and processes to help respond to faculty and other content expert needs in a timely and complete way.
Obj. 2.4.3 Obj. 2.4.5 Obj. 2.4.6 Obj. 2.4.9, Obj. 2.4.10 Obj. 4.1.2	• The Department will maintain a comprehensive student services component delivered through dedicated services specifically designed to address the needs of distance education students.
Goal 3.3 Obj. 1.1.1 Obj. 1.1.3 Obj. 1.3.1 Obj. 1.3.2	• The Department will promote the evaluation of courses from both within and outside the System to improve the quality of HCCS Distance Education programs and services.

Obj. 5.1.5	• The Department will implement short- and long-term marketing plans to increase student enrollment.
See *Note* below	• The Department will comply with SACS (section 4.7 of the Criteria for Accreditation of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges) and THE-CB guidelines for distance education programs.
Obj. 4.2 Obj. 3.5	• The Department will participate in the continual upgrade of the technological infrastructure of HCCS.
Obj. 3.2.2	• The Department will assess contributions to the HCCS institutional effectiveness and quality efforts by conducting a comprehensive program review every 4 years. This process will identify strengths, weaknesses, and plans for improvement.
Obj. 3.4.1	• The Department will support professional development and continuing education of Distance Education and HCCS staff, faculty, and associated community partners.
Obj. 3.2.2	• The Department will maintain close working relationships with the academic, workforce, and student services deans, department chairs, and discipline committees of HCCS.
Obj. 3.4.1	• The Department will recruit HCCS faculty to participate in distance education course development and delivery.
	Note: The Distance Education Department successfully completed the THE-CB Review in February, 2001. Distance Education was noted as being especially effective, with special note made of the Online Orientation Program.

Related Element in "Building a Learning College, HCCS Strategic Plan for 2000-2003"	**Department-Related Goals**
Obj. 3.2.2	• The Department will maintain an Advisory Committee for Distance Education that represents a cross-section of HCCS areas and interests.
Obj. 3.1 Obj. 3.4	• The Department will support the development, maintenance, and growth of the number and variety of courses, certificate, and degree programs in the academic, workforce, and contract training/continuing education areas.
Obj. 4.2.2 Obj. 4.2.4	• The Department will use distance education technologies that remove the barriers imposed by location, time, and limited access.
Obj. 4.4.1 Vision Statement, Item #3	• The Department will establish and maintain professional business relationships, partnerships, and consortia with other colleges, universities, schools, and companies to deliver and receive distance education products and services.

Obj. 3.4.1	• The Department will stay abreast of and advise on copyright, fair use, and intellectual property issues that apply to distance education.
Obj. 3.4.1	• The Department will establish and maintain a leadership role in professional associations and consortia to increase the visibility and prestige of the HCCS Distance Education program.
	• When appropriate, the Department will review, evaluate, and revise the strategic goals and plans of distance education at HCCS.

VI. Products Deliverable Through Distance Education:

- Academic credit courses leading to a degree.
  Note: Distance Education has applied to SACS for a Substantive Change to allow HCCS to offer all general requirement courses for the A.A. and A.A.S. in general studies via distance education.
- Workforce credit courses leading to a degree or certificate.
- Workforce continuing education courses (CEU).
- Contract training.
- Continuing education (non-state-reimbursed CE).
- Developmental and literacy courses.

VII. Customer Base:

- On-campus students who take part of their program on campus.
- Off-campus students who take all of their courses or program through distance education. These students can be in-district, in-state, out-of-state, or international.
- Contract students who take all of their courses through specific company contracts.
- HCCS faculty, administration, and staff.

VIII. Delivery Methods:

- Web-based/internet courses.
- Courses provided over broadcast or cable television.
- Videotape courses.
- Courses offered via videoconferencing systems.
- Print-based courses. *

* Print-based courses have been phased out and are no longer offered starting in the Spring/02 semester.

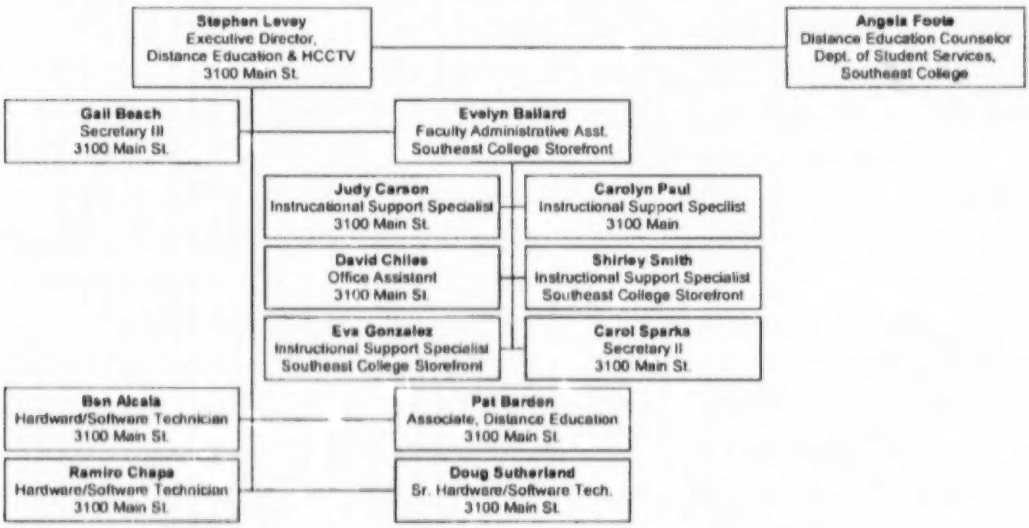
IX. Organization:

The organization of the Distance Education Department must reflect its system-wide responsibilities to faculty, administration, and students. Its structure and reporting lines must encourage its development and support by integrating it with existing instructional and support structures of the colleges and systems. Therefore, continual communication with deans, department chairs, discipline committee chairs, faculty, students, and college and system departments at all levels is essential.

It is important to also note that the DE Department has continually been migrating away from being a "stand-alone" department as it was under the College Without Walls. Rather, DE has endeavored to be highly integrated with the colleges. The components of this operating plan are directed toward that goal of integration. Nearly all of the instruction and support provided to students, besides that it is delivered primarily via technology, is done in an identical way as is done with the more traditional on-campus classes. Many references are made to that throughout this plan.

The DE office takes a leadership role for the HCC System to facilitate, enhance, and grow on- and off-campus distance learning activities by providing the coordination and support that all colleges and faculty need to successfully develop and deliver distance education courses. That role is supported and illustrated in the following organizational chart *(Fig. 3)*.

Figure 3: Organizational Chart, Distance Education, HCCS



X. Roles and Responsibilities:

The following section outlines various roles and responsibilities for groups such as the Distance Education Department, Discipline Committee Chairs, Workforce Program

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Chairs, Department Chairs, and other key personnel. Further, it also provides basic information on issues/questions such as faculty evaluations and SEOI, how faculty get involved in teaching distance education courses, overloads, how DE courses are listed in the HCCS schedule, which faculty teach which courses, the number of courses each faculty should teach, student loads, and other issues. Much of this information was discussed, reviewed, and agreed upon by the consensus of the Faculty Curriculum Committee for Distance Education (2001).

In addition to the roles and responsibilities listed below, all HCCS Distance Education courses are reviewed by the Gulf Coast Regional Higher Education Council and submitted to the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board annually.

I. Distance Education Department

In addition to the above-listed Strategic Goals, the Distance Education Department should be responsible or have shared responsibility for the following:

A. Where appropriate, schedule on-campus orientations for distance education students and faculty.
B. Promote the development of required on-line orientations offered by faculty teaching Internet courses.
C. Provide accountability reports and statistics in areas such as enrollment, finances, retention, and SEOI.
D. Coordinate the allocation of funding for the development of distance education courses.
E. Provide stipends for new course development
F. Serve as a consultant to colleges, faculty, and administration in all aspects of distance education.
G. Follow all current institutional overload policies.
H. Perform a program review every three years to improve program quality, effectiveness, and efficiency toward the on-going goal of continuous improvement.
I. Provide quality testing services for distance education students. Most distance education courses use the DE department testing services.
    - Instructors notify the department of the number of tests they wish to provide and weeks in which these should occur.
    - Testing staff in the DE office coordinate these requests and a testing schedule results.
    - Instructors provide either one master copy of a test or a class set of tests.
    - These tests are inventoried and arranged to be provided to students over a three-day testing weekend.
    - Testing is provided on Friday evening at Eastside. Beginning in the Spring/02 semester, Friday night testing will be administered at 3100 Main. Saturday testing is at Westgate. Sunday testing is at Eastside. *(see*

student handbook, online at http://distance.hccs.cc.tx.us/ for more details on testing times).

- Faculty and part-time proctors work to ensure fair testing conditions.
- All participating faculty who make use of DE on-site testing services, are required to proctor at least one examination for each section of each course taught, if that course requires testing services.

2. Colleges:

Note: See addendum outlining specific Department Chair responsibilities at end of document.

A. Offer and schedule all distance education courses through the regular departmental structure. Enter all distance education courses into PeopleSoft w/ assistance from DE as necessary.
B. Faculty are responsible for providing an on-line orientation for all Internet courses offered as of the Summer/02 semester. On-campus orientations may also be offered for the same course at the faculty's discretion.
C. Assign and pay faculty according to system-wide load formulas.
D. Follow all current institutional overload policies.
E. Evaluate all faculty teaching distance education courses.
F. Provide negotiated workload time as deemed appropriate for development of new distance education courses.
G. Through the Discipline Committees/Workforce Programs, be responsible for the overall quality standards of all distance education courses. *(see Section 4. below)*.
H. Provide student support services for distance education students. This is a shared responsibility amongst counselors and other student services personnel throughout the system. However, orientation for counselors, training, and other updates will be provided by the Distance Education Counselor in the Student Services Department of Southeast College.

3. Libraries:

A. Provide library services that meet distance education student needs in fulfilling course assignments and that enrich academic programs.
B. Support the information needs of distance learners by providing comprehensive online library services and learning resources equivalent to those offered for on-campus students and courses.

4. The Role/Relationship between Discipline Committees/Workforce Programs and Distance Education:

A. The Discipline Committee/Workforce Program is responsible for establishing overall quality standards of all distance education courses that:
   - Ensure appropriateness of distance education modality to course content.
   - Ensure integrity of course content for all courses offered via distance education.

B. Discipline Committee/Workforce Program assures that:
   - Classes meet basic criteria for other courses offered throughout HCCS and that the course is suitable for the medium selected. DE must provide input for this suitability in the form of a checklist provided to all Discipline

Committees and Workforce Programs. Therefore, in addition to Discipline Committee/Workforce Program requirements for on-campus course offerings, the following criteria are recommended by the DE Department for all distance education-delivered courses:

- The plan for the distance education course is coherent and complete.
- Preferably, an on-campus (in-classroom) version of the course is offered at HCCS (although a new distance education course can also be offered even if it is not a current on-campus offering).
- If used in on-campus department courses, an appropriate departmental final should also be administered for distance education courses.
- The course provides for appropriate faculty/student and student/student interaction.
- The academic standards for this distance education course are the same as those for the equivalent course offered elsewhere at HCCS. The course is comparable to traditionally-delivered courses in rigor, depth, and breadth.
- Student outcomes and learning objectives for the distance education course are the same or comparable to student learning in the equivalent course offered elsewhere at HCCS.
- The technologies used in the distance education course provide for faculty accessibility, support, student interaction, and instruction. On weekdays, faculty should be able to respond to student inquiries within 24 hours.
- Course and faculty evaluation will be performed as prescribed by HCCS to ensure educational effectiveness. Revisions will be documented and reviewed to ensure course standards are met.
- Support services such as instructions on the use of the technology, accessing library services, student services and information on instructor availability should be made available in the course.

- Discipline Committee/Workforce Programs are responsible for reviewing all distance education courses created by groups or faculty other than HCCS. (e.g., publisher-produced courses).
- Workforce courses must meet all Workforce Education Course Manual (WECM) requirements.
- Discipline Committee/Workforce Program must identify how to assess the effectiveness of distance education courses compared to their on-campus versions.

5. Faculty Evaluation for Distance Education Courses:

   A. The Faculty Curriculum Committee (2001) identified that Department Chairs are responsible for the ongoing quality of all courses in their area of instruction.
   B. It is the role and responsibility of department chairs to perform evaluations of their faculty who teach distance education courses just as it is their

responsibility to evaluate faculty who teach on-campus courses. It is not the role of the Distance Education Department to do so.

C. It is the chair's responsibility to evaluate and approve all new distance education courses produced by their faculty prior to offering those courses to students. An approval form is available on line at the Distance Education website (http://distance.hccs.cc.tx.us/) or from Instructional Computing Resource Center (ICRC).

D. It is the responsibility of the DE Dept. to recommend criteria for department chairs to include in the DE faculty evaluation process. Therefore, in addition to instruments used for faculty teaching on-campus courses, the following criteria are recommended by the Distance Education Department for all distance-delivered courses:

Note: The Distance Education Department recommends that evaluation of faculty teaching distance education courses should be based on content, presentation, student performance, interaction, and design, as they are with courses taught on-campus. The "Evaluation Checklist for Faculty Teaching Distance Education Courses" is available at http://distance.hccs.cc.tx.us/ and clicking on Faculty Resources.

- The learning outcomes of the course are appropriate to the scope of the degree or certificate awarded by HCCS and should be comparable to on-campus offerings of the same course.
- The course provides for appropriate and adequate faculty to student and student to student interaction and support. The faculty makes him/herself adequately available to students via electronic means.
- Using electronic means, the instructor contributes as a discussion leader and is open to student views.
- The course objectives and goals, and outcomes as presented and offered by the faculty are coherent and are consistent with those presented in on-campus offerings of the same course.
- The format of the distance education course (e.g., discussions, lectures, chat, opportunities for Q&A, availability of faculty using electronic means) is conducive to student learning and encourages students to express themselves.
- The assignments are useful and consistent with the on-campus offering of the same course.
- If provided, online tests are administered properly and securely. There is sufficient opportunity provided for course review and student feedback in preparation for tests.
- Appropriate online or on-site course orientation is provided to students for this distance education course.

E. The assessment of learning outcomes must be consistent with on-campus offerings of the same course.

6. Student Evaluation of Instruction (SEOI):

A. The Faculty Curriculum Committee approved Distance Education to put SEOI on line for web-based distance education courses only. For other courses, the DE department will continue to administer SEOI at final examinations.
B. On line SEOI will be administered at the same time as on-campus SEOI. The online SEOI process is scheduled to begin during the Spring/02 semester.
C. SEOI reports and data will be tabulated and distributed to the colleges by the Office of Institutional Research (OIR) as is customarily done with all on-campus courses. At the same time, OIR will provide a complete copy of all tabulated SEOI results to the Distance Education Department.
D. Additional questions were recommended by Distance Education for inclusion in the online and paper SEOI for DE students. They were reviewed and approved by the Institutional Research SEOI Committee (David Ugwu, Ed.D., Chair, 10/01/01) and have been included in the new SEOI for DE students. The questions for the new Distance Education SEOI instrument are on the following page:

Student Evaluation of Distance Education Instruction

Part I. Evaluation of Instruction (To be completed by all students).

1. The course requirements in the syllabus were clearly stated.
2. The textbook used for this course is suitable.
3. The course made good use of mixed media, graphics, text, and other technologies.
   [yes, neutral, no, no basis for judgment]

Part II. Evaluation of Instructor (To be completed by all students).

4. The instructor provided an effective orientation for this Distance Education course.
5. The instructor encouraged students to use technology to increase class interactivity/collaboration.
6. The instructor communicates clearly by way of handouts, on-line lectures, postings, WEB sites, etc.
7. The instructor is available for student consultation by phone, on-line, face-to-face.
8. The assignments were relevant to the course.
9. My grades are an indication of my learning.
10. The instructor gives timely feedback on all assignments and student queries.
11. Given the limitations of Distance Education, the instructor provided at least one opportunity to practice what I learned.
    (strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, strongly disagree, no basis for judgment).

Part III. Lab Evaluation (To be completed by students enrolled in a laboratory or clinical class).

12. The instructor explains appropriate safety procedures for this laboratory/clinical.
13. The instructor links the laboratory exercises to the on-line instructional component of the course.
    (strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, strongly disagree, no basis for judgment).

Part IV. Overall Evaluation (To be completed by all students).

14. Compared to a similar face-to-face class for equal credit, the quality of my learning in this course was generally equivalent.
15. I would recommend this Distance Education course to other students.
    (strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, strongly disagree, no basis for judgment).

7. Distance Education Textbooks:

   A. Department Chairs are responsible for ordering all textbooks for Distance Education courses using the same process as exists for on-campus classes. Textbook problems reported to the DE Department will be referred to the appropriate faculty.

8. Overloads:

   A. As must be done in all departments throughout all colleges, DE will follow existing and current HCCS policies regarding overloads. *(See also, 12. How Student Loads Are Distributed Among Participating Faculty" and "14. Determination of Distance Education Class Size.")*
   B. Enforcing this overload policy will be the responsibility of department chairs. Department Chairs will work with DE in accomplishing this goal.

9. How Faculty Get Involved in Teaching Distance Education Courses:

   A. All faculty wishing to teach a new distance education course must acquire the on-line form and related instructions found at the Distance Education website (http://distance.hccs.cc.tx.us/). Click on the link entitled, "How faculty get involved in teaching distance education courses." Faculty should complete the form and present it to their department chair. Department chair signoff is required for all DE course applications and discipline committee chair signoff is required for academic courses. The form must then be forwarded to the Distance Education Department for acknowledgement and consideration for grant/stipend funding. Stipends are not necessary to develop a distance education course. However, all departments must notify the Distance Education Department of the planned development and subsequent offering of any distance education course.

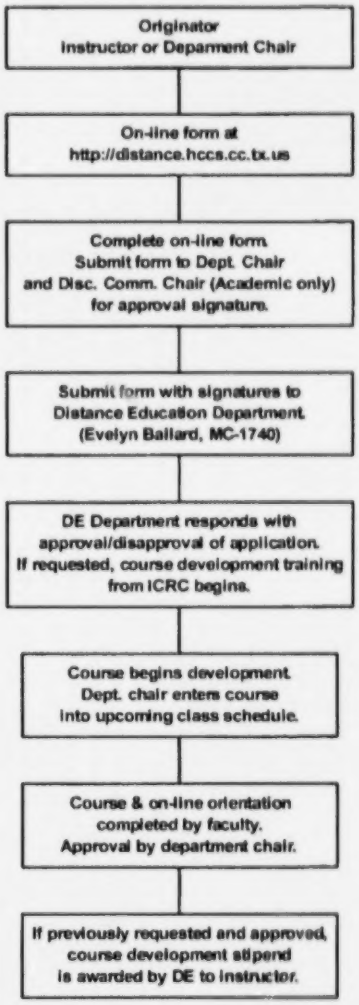
      The Distance Education will evaluate applications for grant funding. Its role is to approve/disapprove course applications and grants/stipends for Distance Education courses. A schedule for submitting applications to meet semester deadlines is on the course application form.

      Following application approval, the instructor submitting the application will be notified and course development will begin. Instructional Computing Resource Center and some individual colleges can provide training in the WebCT development application platform which faculty can use to create distance education courses.

      A course review of any new DE course is required to be performed by the appropriate department chair prior to offering any new course to students. No

course development stipends will be provided to faculty until the course has been approved by the department chair.

Figure 5: Flow Chart Outlining Course Development Application Process



10. How DE courses are listed in the HCCS schedule:

    A. Department Chairs are responsible for entering all courses in the course schedule with assistance from Distance Education as needed.
    B. Distance Education has a responsibility to monitor course entries in upcoming course schedules. It is required that department chairs notify DE of all courses entered. Following this notification, DE is responsible for entering orientation information in the course schedules.

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C. Courses should be listed only under the DE section in schedule.
   - An individual entering class information has the option to enter a comment under an on-campus class to direct to DE for "additional sections."

D. For nearly all courses, a separate CRN number must be established for each section of each course in the DE schedule listings, just as it is done for on-campus classes. This will be implemented in the Spring/02 semester. Students enrolled in sections that do not "make" will be handled in the same manner they are on campus (i.e., the class will be cancelled and students will be transferred to another section if there is available space). Department chairs of cancelled classes will be responsible for "callbacks." Split classes will be processed by department chairs at their college's Registrar's Office.

11. Which Faculty Teach Which Distance Education Classes?

A. For new courses: Department chairs make this decision within each of their own colleges.
B. For existing courses: Department chairs make this decision within each of their own colleges.
C. DE will keep abreast of enrollment in DE courses and notify department chairs when more or fewer faculty/sections are required.

12. How Student Loads Are Distributed Among Participating Faculty When Multiple Departments Are Involved:

A. Department chairs determine the number of sections they want each faculty to teach.
B. DE should monitor enrollment in each section and temporarily cap a section as needed during registration. This is done to ensure equitable distribution of enrollment amongst all instructors teaching a particular course.
C. For low-enrollment courses, department chairs must collaborate to decide which college will offer these courses.
D. All must be aware that, in most cases, PeopleSoft will list lower CRN #'s before higher ones in the Course Schedules. This may have an impact on enrollment in these courses.

Note: A DE Resolution Committee will be established for Distance Education. This Committee will present the "final word" on resolving disputes or issues that arise in the academic or workforce areas. This Committee will be small, comprised of Discipline Committee Chairs so it can meet quickly to resolve issues that arise. Representation will rotate periodically.

13. Number of Courses Each Faculty Member Should Teach:

A. The consensus of the Faculty Curriculum Committee was that this is clearly an individual department chair decision, subject to adequate enrollment.
B. The DE Department reserves the right to temporarily cap sections when necessary to ensure equitable distribution of enrollment amongst DE instructors.

14. Determination of Distance Education Class Size:

A. The recommended class size for internet/web-based distance education courses is 25 (starting in the Summer/02 semester).
B. Final approval for class size will be determined by the Academic and Workforce Deans with input from the discipline committee and hub chairs. Also, input from DE administration will be included to help determine this final approval. A list of recommended class sizes (both minimum and maximum) will be generated prior to the Fall/02 semester.
C. The Faculty Curriculum Committee for DE, in principle, indicated that class size should be consistent with how traditional, on-campus class sizes are determined. However, the dissimilarity in the complexities and technologies of delivering internet-based courses compared with on-campus courses could mean that class sizes may differ.

Note: Also see notation on separate CRN numbers for each distance education section in "10. How DE Courses Are Listed in the HCCS Schedule."

15. Instructional Computing Resource Center (ICRC):

A. ICRC supports the development of web-based courses through IC faculty internship program and specified allocation of ICRC staff resources. WebCT training for faculty, staff, and administration will be provided by ICRC. Colleges also provide WebCT training for faculty and staff.
B. ICRC, along with DE staff, assists faculty in creating on-line orientations for web-based distance education courses.

16. Information Technology.

It is the responsibility of Information Technology to work collaboratively with DE to:

- Provide responsive and reliable backup and recovery support services for all Distance Education course servers.

    - Ensure that students, faculty, and staff have ready access to all distance education materials on a 24/7 basis.
    - Provide reliable tape backup services.
    - Secure a reliable redundant backup "hot site" for all servers identified by DE.
- Provide and manage email accounts for all on and off-campus distance education faculty and staff.
    - Upgrade email applications and capabilities periodically.
    - Maintain email services for students and faculty on a 24/7 basis. Minimize downtime.
- Provide network resources and bandwidth capacity necessary to support distance education courses.
    - Actively partner with DE to anticipate and plan for future technology needs to better serve students in:
        1. Video streaming.
        2. Audioconferencing.
        3. Live teleconferences delivered via IP.
        4. Effective delivery of images and multimedia to students for instructional purposes.
        5. Internet 2 usage.
        6. Wireless communication.
        7. Other new technologies.
- Participate in the continual upgrade of the technological infrastructure of Distance Education at HCCS.
    - Ensure that PeopleSoft applications support the instructional needs of students and faculty and the administrative requirements of faculty and DE staff.
    - Provide advice on the purchase of new hardware, software, and other systems to be used for the effective delivery of distance education to students.
- Provide more incentives for faculty to increase their professional skills in the area of instructional technology.
    - Provide site licenses for popular software/applications that have a significant impact on the delivery of quality distance education. Of particular significance are those applications that increase class interactivity and collaboration.
    - Provide training opportunities for faculty and staff in all appropriate areas of technology development.
- Promote the use of technology as a means of delivering distance education to underserved students.
- Provide collaborative support to all online library functions that support DE students.
- Provide collaborative support to all online student services support functions.

- Provide collaborative support for all online testing services provided to distance education students.
- Provide quality security for all technology-driven services of Distance Education.
- Provide quality telephone service to/from all areas of Distance Education.
- Provide quality and responsive 24/7 "Help Desk" services for all staff, faculty, and students who access Distance Education services.

17. HCCTV:

A. Produces video segments in support of distance education courses.
B. Airs HCCS telecourses.
C. Provides master control services for all cable TV distance education broadcasts.

ADDENDUM

Specific Distance Education Guidelines for Department Chairs

(excerpted from DE Operating Plan)

Evaluations

The Faculty Curriculum Committee (2001) identified that Department Chairs are responsible for the ongoing quality of all courses in their area of instruction. Therefore, it is clearly the role and responsibility of department chairs to perform evaluations of their faculty who teach distance education courses just as it is their responsibility to evaluate faculty who teach on-campus courses. It is not the role of the Distance Education Department to do so.

However, it is the responsibility of the DE Dept. to recommend criteria for department chairs to include in the DE faculty evaluation process. Therefore, in addition to instruments used for faculty teaching on-campus courses, the following criteria are recommended by the Distance Education Department for all distance-delivered courses:

> *Note: The Distance Education Department recommends that evaluation of faculty teaching distance education courses should be based on content, presentation, student performance, interaction, and design, as they are with courses taught on-campus.*

- The learning outcomes of the course are appropriate to the scope of the degree or certificate awarded by HCCS and should be comparable to on-campus offerings of the same course.
- The course provides for appropriate and adequate faculty to student and student to student interaction and support. The faculty makes him/herself adequately available to students via electronic means.
- Using electronic means, the instructor contributes as a discussion leader and is open to student views.
- The course objectives and goals, and outcomes as presented and offered by the faculty are coherent and are consistent with those presented in on-campus offerings of the same course.
- The format of the distance education course (e.g., discussions, lectures, chat, opportunities for Q&A, availability of faculty using electronic means) is conducive to student learning and encourages students to express themselves.
- The assignments are useful and consistent with the on-campus offering of the same course.
- If provided, online tests are administered properly and securely. There is sufficient opportunity provided for course review and student feedback in preparation for tests.
- Appropriate online or on-site course orientation is provided to students for this distance education course.
- The assessment of learning outcomes must be consistent with on-campus offerings of the same course.

Overloads

Department Chairs will follow all existing and current HCCS policies regarding overloads for Distance Education courses just as they would for all on-campus courses. Department Chairs will work with DE in accomplishing this goal.

Getting Involved in Teaching Distance Education Courses

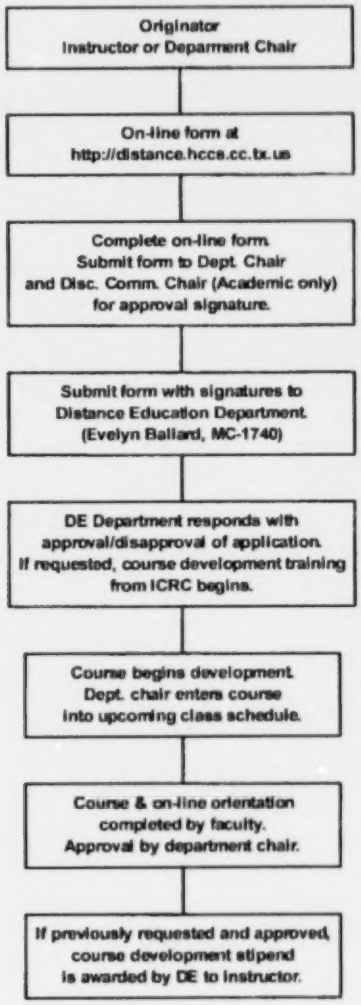
All faculty wishing to teach a new distance education course must acquire the on-line form and related instructions found at the Distance Education website (http://distance.hccs.cc.tx.us/). Click on the link entitled, "How faculty get involved in teaching distance education courses." Faculty should complete the form and present it to their department chair. Department chair signoff is required for all DE course applications and discipline committee chair signoff is required for academic courses. The form must then be forwarded to the Distance Education Department for acknowledgement and consideration for grant/stipend funding. Stipends are not necessary to develop a distance education course. However, all departments must notify the Distance Education Department of the planned development and subsequent offering of any distance education course.

Distance Education will evaluate applications for grant funding. Its role is to approve/disapprove course applications and grants/stipends for Distance Education courses. A schedule for submitting applications to meet semester deadlines is on the course application form.

Following application approval, the instructor submitting the application will be notified and course development will begin. Instructional Computing Resource Center and some individual colleges can provide training in the WebCT development application platform which faculty can use to create distance education courses.

A course review of any new DE course is required to be performed by the appropriate department chair prior to offering any new course to students. No course development stipends will be provided to faculty until the course has been approved by the department chair.

Figure 5: Flow Chart Outlining Course Development Application Process



Listing DE Courses in HCCS Class Schedule

- Department Chairs are responsible for entering all courses in the course schedule with assistance from Distance Education as needed.
- Distance Education has a responsibility to monitor course entries in upcoming course schedules. It is required that department chairs notify DE of all courses entered. Following this notification, DE is responsible for entering orientation information in the course schedules.

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- Courses should be listed only under the DE section in schedule.
    - An individual entering class information has the option to enter a comment under an on-campus class to direct to DE for "additional sections."
- A separate CRN number should be established for each section of each course in the DE schedule listings, just as it is done for on-campus classes, unless otherwise arranged. This will be implemented in the Spring/02 semester. Students enrolled in sections that do not "make" will be handled in the same manner they are on campus (i.e., the class will be cancelled and students will be transferred to another section if there is available space). Department chairs of cancelled classes will be responsible for "callbacks."

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- DE should monitor enrollment in each section and temporarily cap a section as needed during registration. This is done to ensure equitable distribution of enrollment amongst all instructors teaching a particular course.
- For low-enrollment courses, department chairs must collaborate to decide which college will offer these courses.
- All must be aware that, in most cases, PeopleSoft will list lower CRN #'s before higher ones in the Course Schedules. This may have an impact on enrollment in these courses.

Number of Courses Each Faculty Member Should Teach

- This is clearly an individual department chair decision, subject to adequate enrollment.
- The DE Department reserves the right to temporarily cap certain sections when necessary to ensure equitable distribution of enrollment amongst DE instructors.

Determination of Distance Education Class Size

- The discipline committee/workforce program, department chairs, and deans are the primary determiners of this. In principle, this should be consistent with how traditional, on-campus class sizes are determined.
- Discipline committees should create a policy for setting caps for DE courses. This should be done together with input from DE administration.

Student Evaluation of Instruction (SEOI)

- The Faculty Curriculum Committee approved Distance Education to put SEOI on line for web-based distance education courses only. For other courses, the DE department will continue to administer SEOI at final examinations.
- On line SEOI will be administered at the same time as on-campus SEOI. The online SEOI process is scheduled to begin during the Spring/02 semester.
- SEOI reports and data will be tabulated and distributed to the colleges by the Office of Institutional Research (OIR) as is customarily done with all on-campus courses. At the same time, OIR will provide a complete copy of all tabulated SEOI results to the Distance Education Department.
- Additional questions were recommended by Distance Education for inclusion in the online and paper SEOI for DE students. They were reviewed and approved by the Institutional Research SEOI Committee (David Ugwu, Ed.D., Chair, 10/01/01) and have been included in the new SEOI for DE students.

U.S. Department of Education
Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI)
National Library of Education (NLE)
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